



78
REFLECTIONS



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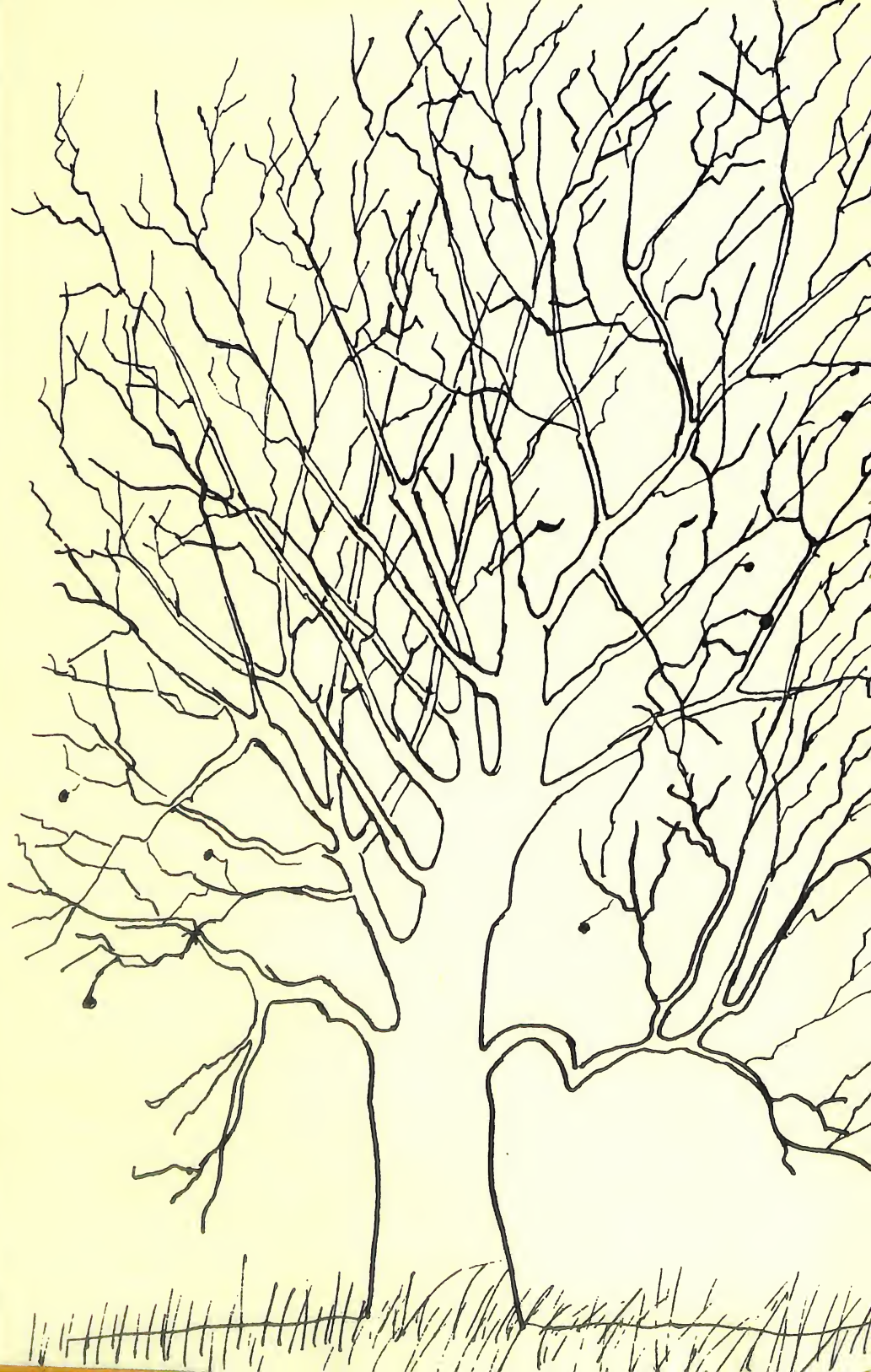
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THE APPLE TREE

Cold, dead, withered limbs
Reaching, groping, beckoning skyward
Rough, knotty branches
Standing, waiting, searching, hoping
Vast, frozen, winter, night.

Hot, living, firm limbs
Grasping, finding, drawing earthward
Selfish, greedy, sprawling youth
Standing, hiding, minutely relishing
Melting, sensual, summer morn.

Cool, dying, withering limbs
Giving, providing, relinquishing outward
Unselfish, loving, patient elder
Breaking, heavy, providing, relishing
Vast, cool, autumn evening.

David Putnam

Hey! Hey! Preacher Man!
Have you any message?
Yes. Yes. One for the clergy
Two for the laity
And three, for those without affiliation.
Shape up your act
Get in the groove
Don't stand outside and act the fool.
You've made a mess of things
You could do much better
It's cold outside in this kind of weather.
Consecrate and hold the line.
Make no distinction between mine and thine.
Dedicate, dedicate.
Put your all on the alter
And alter your all.
Judicate, Judicate, Judicate.
God will adjudicate you.
So spoke the preacher from a parapet
Until the Devil tapped him and said, "you're it."

E. M. Blankenship

CAROLINA NIGHT

Velvet darkness quietly descends
Transforming the valley
Into an ebony cathedral
Surrounded by heavenly spires;
And like a mother's soothing hand
Gently caresses
The wrinkled brow of the earth.

Ronnie Prevost

A day of torn anguish and pain
sprawls across a page
for some fool to read
and smile at.

Crissman D. Nichols

GOD'S SURPRISE PACKAGE

No thunder on the mountain,
no fire or smoke or rushing wind,
no blast of trumpet sound to blend
with marching legions feet
through Bethlehem's still, silent street.

Just travail sounds and lowing cattle,
a stable, straw, and waiting manger,
angel's song, a shining star, and a baby's cry,
and quaking shepherds gazing in the sky.

No mighty mounted waring king
come to set his people free,
with staffed banner waving high,
just the angels' song and a shining star,
and a baby's cry.

God deals in small surprises
His wonders to perform,
beginning with a baby, soft and warm
to grow a strong Redeemer
to deal with men and sin and death.

Nation longing for Messiah
got instead a wandering preacher,
teacher, healer rolled in one,
God's best surprise, His Only Son.

Surprising was inclusive love,
and teaching like no man had ever heard,
surprised the leper, lame, and blind
when Jesus made them whole,
surprised the lost and sinful
when He cleansed their guilty soul.

In the end as in surprise beginning,
towel and basin, bread and wine,
a cross and an empty tomb,
and it all began with the angels' song,
a shining star and a baby's cry,
and quaking shepherds gazing in the sky.

T. M. Linnens

DEFIANT COOPERATION

Freedom is a wonderful thing--a gift of the Gods
And all of us feel that we must have it, with proper limitations.
We stretch out reach up and look down.
In every direction the possibility cuts us short of desire.
The Gods control everything down to the very Soul.
Sometimes we move easily and think that we are free,
But soon we are relieved of such delusions
For we see that we do not have control of the air we breathe
Or the source of the food we eat
Or the social possibilities that we are subjected to
Or even the thoughts that engage our minds.
The germs will come and do their final work
My body will not resist
I will lie down and die,
Fully cooperating, but I will not cry.

E. M. Blankenship

MUTUAL LOVE

Ask not what I can do for my country or for you
Asking sets a limit on it.
Let me be free to express in greater terms of love
Than your challenge will allow.
If you asked for the greatest sacrifice
Perhaps I would not give it.
One can only give as he learns to love
And no one can impose the terms.
The one who receives a gift
Must have a deserving grace
Which is as becoming to him
As it is to a liberal giver.
There is no worthy gift without a worthy giver
And there is no worthy giver
Unless there be a worthy receiver.

E. M. Blankenship

JFK...DEAD

The message stunned and startled.
Then we sobbed.
Oh God! The wife...the children.
Us.

The police caught and clasped.
Then they questioned.
Oh Sin! That fool...the hatred.
Ours.

The leaders dazed and daunted.
Then they dared.
Oh Nation! The needs...the challenge.
Mine. Mine.

John R. Drayer

MORPHOGENESIS DENIED

"Shall a man go and hang himself because he belongs to the race of pygmies and not be the biggest pygmy that he can?"

Thoreau

To know that greatness will never come,
that life swirls and pulsates within the membrane
of mediocrity, shifting, extending, but always
confined by the bounds of its own being . . .

To touch the medium of another man's
transformation . . .

A deaf man magnified written
words of joy.
Another man appeased the rector by transcribing
the reverberations of God.
A crippled drunk staggered through an exhibition
and drew magnificent pictures of sound.

And Guernica's blood does not fade.
The Seasons continue to resound.
The stone Pieta turns through time.
And mediocrity nudges greatness,
And feels, and quivers in response,

And knows
That greatness will never come,
That the reply itself is but
another quiver of mediocrity,
shifting, extending, but always
confined . . .

Joyce Brown

HIDY THERE, AUNT ELLER!

"They're suspecting things. "People will say
we're in love."

Rogers' and Hammerstein's
Oklahoma

Hidy there, Aunt Eller!
This here's yer feller;
This here's Carnes,
Who beckons yer towards barns,
Towards hay soft 'n yeller,
Tellin' yer outlandish yarns
And tryin' ter make yer meller!
So's yer'll be with yer feller, Carnes.

But oh no, Aunt Eller,
Sweet talk makes yer wary;
Makes yer think a feller
Wants ter court 'n marry
And yer won't have that nary
A bit; it makes yer tarry
A bit and beller,
Don't it, Aunt Eller?

Yer wants 'em ter vary
And yer wants 'em ter beg
And this here feller
Hopes yer breaks yer leg,
Yer confounded ol' filly,
Jist a great big ol' Dily!
I said, this here's yer feller,
But don't go gittin' skeered
And commence ter actin' afeared
When I says,

This here's yer feller, Carnes,
Who likes ter steer yer towards barns,
'Cause some of them outlandish yarns
Is true ...
Sech as I love you.

Harvey Ramsey



WINTER HOUSES

We are poised now
Birds in barren trees
 in our winter houses

Christmas has come, gone
Eggs boil on the stove
We build our fires
Let us huddle to this warmth
 in our winter houses

The earth is reborn
in desert relief outside the window
The wind is sharper
thrusting the chimney
whipping the fire-flame down
 in our winter houses

It is after this season
that spring comes
We will wait for the first violets
bringing them inside
 our winter houses

Suzette Collins Thompson

THEATER PIECE

A house is used as a cage for hunting dogs
I observe this house in the evenings
I walk there carrying tools and wire
 imagining the effect of bare electric lights
 or the moire patterns on the screened porches

I stand on the porch hosing down my images,
scribbling a note:
 wet dogs trotting up and down the stairway
 two framed pictures of hummingbirds
 asleep in mid-air

 ...against walls painted blue
leaving small cloud-patches of bare plaster
as in the background of a renaissance painting

The characters were not quite three-dimensional.
A hired man lies on the floor on his back
stretching one arm toward the ceiling.
Two others, sprayed with water,
stand beside a window reading a dialogue.

The color fades from the walls.
The lights are turned on.
Outside, I watch their mouths through the screen.

At the real houses, they thought that every
silhouette at a door was something...harmful
No.

Wayne Blankenship

PRAYER FOR THE MATRON
ENTERING THE PORTALS OF NITA'S BEAUTY SHOPPE

Lord, pity the woman with hair that does not move
in the wind.

Have mercy upon her spirit, teased and twisted.
Release her from the final frozen net
which binds her life.

Free her from the false commandments
of beauty parlor priests
And make her to walk fearless on the beach,
to lay her body down upon the water
with her children.

Enable her to walk hoodless in the rain
and to rejoice in the breeze of wind against motion.
Give her the grace to live rather than to appear.

In the evening, grant, O Lord,
unregimented sleep,
And in the morning, give her
a gusty day.

Joyce Brown

EXCAVATING PIGS

The forms without scaffolding move in agony
because the joints are in the wrong places.
They must travel in ruts in the ground.
In this reconstruction, the ribs would drag below ground level.
It travels in furrows I have made with my arms,
crawling along in front of it.

...pictures that Elizabethan Englishmen tried to imitate
in their dress.
They wore elaborate collars like frilled lizards.
They puffed themselves up and displayed these collars.
Queen Elizabeth herself lay dying
under some breastbone canopy
with an inch of white powder caked on her face
and frightened everyone away by turning her neck toward them.

At the London Exposition of 1851
Richard Owen held a dinner inside his unfinished model of an Iguanodon
the Iguanodon moved in agony from the sweet prayers
offered up in its stomach by the men before eating,
and from the sweet poems they recited as they squeezed
their bread into the shapes of animals:

"How many strawberries grow in the salt sea?
How many ships sail in the forest?"

Wayne Blankenship

PREPARATION BY THE ABSENT MINDED PROFESSOR

The professor rode out to the barn in his big black Buick
For exercise and recreation which he needed badly.
The tall bay horse was waiting patiently in the stall
For the currying which he enjoyed,
During which the professor raised a sweat
Then the saddle was securely fastened on--a job well done.
He got into the Buick and drove away.
The horse stood still, but he was puzzled
Since he was prepared to go
But had been left.

E. M. Blankenship

BEWARE OF CHILDREN

Beware of children -

They fashion their truth with our idle words -
And filter out the sediment in our souls -
And build their castles in our sand.

Beware of children -

When the world is shattered, they will become
Rock collectors and stone masons;
Some casting stones and some building altars.

Beware of children -

Every generation fears them - cheers them -
And follows their spirited dreams with anxious hope
That they will be better than we who are older.

Beware of them -

For everyone of us is once a child
And forever a man who longs to return to where they are
Childlike in desires, and hopes, and dreams.

Ken Lida

LIMERICK #1

There once was a Billy from Plains
Who went to very great pains
To sell far and near
His low-grade beer
While can after can he drains.

Hawkeye



The old people talk about birth and marriage and injury
and accomplishment and death
in almost the same sentence.
All of life,
including death,
run together in a single stream of thought.
They talk of pain and death and joy in the same breath
as if they were all the same thing.
I don't know--maybe they are.

And the old people talk about their aches and pains
as if the talking would relieve the pain.
Their chins are set hard and firm against a world
that will not hear their wisdom.
They see the pain and suffering;
they take it in, and it becomes a part of them;
and people grow tired of listening to them talk of it.

Crissman D. Nichols

MATTIE

Quiet now, pale in a semi-coma,
almost conquered by the cancer in your lung.
Overdue vacation you said
when the doctor found the growing lump
and you went away and had the breast removed,
and no one ever knew,

For you worked until a few short weeks ago,
and then you seemed to melt away.
Four days now you've drifted in and out,
mumbled, sipped a little water.
But now you open wide your eyes,
and tap some reservoir of strength,

Call for you husband, speak tender words to him,
mother, father, brothers, sisters, one by one
you have a word of love and then farewell.
We stand hushed and still with chill bumps
as you smile and sweetly sing,
"I won't have to cross Jordan alone,
Jesus died for my sins to atone."

Then lay back upon your pillow,
breathed softly, smiled, and left us.
Like an empty cottage was your body,
vacant window-eyes, open mouth-door,
empty, quiet, nobody home.
But in that quiet I thought I heard
in the distance happy voices
and sounds of splashing feet
racing 'cross the shallow river.

T. M. Linnens

THE AWAKENING

The death-like blackness of the cold winter night was pierced by intermittent flashes of red and blue. Lying on the hard frozen ground, the victim could hear distant voices, but as to their origin and nature, he was unsure. Oblivious to his condition, the bewildered man was only able to discern the cold dampness of his clothing, further aggravated by a biting and merciless wind. A soothing trickle of warmth, however, slowly crept along the crevices of his body lulling him quietly into a deep, deep sleep.

An hour later, all was quiet on the mountain. A single car waited impatiently by the roadside. The scene was cold and harsh. Sensing this forbidding nature and his unwelcome presence, the sheriff began to move briskly away from the accident scene. Attempting to break the overwhelming silence of the terrain, he began to deliver a nervous and disjointed monologue.

"He'uz lucky," declared the sheriff as he motioned the young deputy back to the car. "He'uz lucky that he was found alive. That is, come to think of it, he'uz lucky that he'uz even found atawl. These mountains ain't got no respect for people. No sir, they make others do the respectin'." After a brief pause, he added: "And people that ain't got no respect for 'em oughter be killed." Receiving no reply, the sheriff quickened his pace through the eerie darkness. He could almost feel the night closing in upon him with each advancing footstep. Growing impatient with his unexplainable fear, he growled: "Hey, are you comin' or not? Let's get outa here."

The deputy did not move. That night he had seen his first really bad accident. His initial glance at the burning truck and the bloody glob lying between him and the ball of fire had frozen him in his tracks. Throughout the entire clean-up and rescue operation, he had stood, perched atop the jagged abutment overlooking the accident scene like a statue carved there from the bare gray stone as a memorial to the helpful civil servant commonly known as the lawman.

Now, after the victim and the rescue workers had abandoned the scene, the distraught deputy continued to stand, peering down upon the burned out smoldering shell that, until an hour ago, had been a truck. Feeling the soothing hand of his superior on his shoulder, the deputy's trance was finally broken. The two tiny figures began to move slowly and silently toward the car. Hurriedly, they pulled away, returning the harsh and merciless mountain to its usual state of bleakness.

Being aroused to consciousness by a sudden jolt, Herbert T. Goodman saw the light and decided that it was morning. He was able to detect a flurry of excitement and anxiety in the air. He was moving. Or was he? The faces above him seemed to move also, almost as if they were attached to him. The sky had turned from black to white and now it too seemed to move, but in the opposite direction. It seemed to be moving away from him. Splotches of white light were moving through the sky. The splotches of light, however, looked more like lines; like the white lines in the middle of a road. He was moving toward something. Or, was he moving away? He was definitely getting dizzy. He was going somewhere fast; but where? He was cold.

The large blue double doors opened simultaneously with a buzzing noise. Another jolt and he was in the center of a large room. The huge sun shone brightly above him. He closed his eyes to shut out the light. Darkness had again descended. He was asleep.

The operating room was filled with the sounds of Death. The sterile noises of the various life-support systems seemed to amplify and intensify the somber mood of the occasion. The rasping sounds of the respiratory devices and the intermittent clinking of surgical tools joined forces with the deep and murmured voices of the doctors to create a symphony directed by the steady bleeping of the heart monitor. Suddenly, however, without warning, the music stopped. The steady rhythm no longer emanated from the metronome. It had been replaced by a long continuous electronic tone. Herbert T. Goodman was dead.

Curious eyes were focused intently on the scene of red, white, and blue below. As doctors and nurses worked frantically to restore life to the shrunken figure beneath the blue and bloody sheets, Herbert T. Goodman was content with the fact that his struggle was finally over. Turning his eyes upward into the passage-way which hovered above his head, he began his ascent.

Herbert T. Goodman had been a farmer all of his life. Along with his wife, Christine, a city-dweller at heart, and their five year old daughter, Christy, Herbert had moved into the old homeplace of his childhood after his father had died. It was decided that since his aging mother would have been left alone with no one to care for her, it would be best if he and his family moved back to the Valley.

So, despite the protests of his wife and daughter, Herbert picked up his family and moved home.

The only problem with the Valley was the flooding. Every spring, the melting snows of the mountains and the increased rainfall glutted the many small streams and tributaries causing minor flooding everywhere. At most, however, the flooding was now no more than a nuisance causing the newly planted seeds and young seedlings to be swept away. Spring planting was always undertaken at least twice a year.

People living in the Valley, however, were not always so fortunate. Until a decade ago, the only asset that the Valley had to offer its inhabitants was its fertile ground. The many tiny springs of the Valley which originated high in the mountains, would reach flood stage every spring after the first major thaw. The cascading waters, in their frenzied attempt to reach the lowlands, would rush into the Valley, and in a matter of hours all would be lost.

The floods always came without warning, too. The water would often reach the Valley at night when many people were asleep and unprepared. In such cases, the death toll was unusually high. The tiny river banks, unable to handle the increased load, would often collapse, leaving no place for the waters to recede. Then the earth, acting like a giant sponge, would begin the long process of saturation.

Nothing of any lasting value was ever brought into the Valley because the floods were certain to wash it away. The land was so rich in nutrients, however, that many people, including the Goodman family, were enticed to remain despite the torrential flooding. Each spring, their farmhouse had to be repaired or even rebuilt because of flood damage. No cattle or livestock was ever raised on the Goodman farm,

or anywhere else in the Valley for that matter. It was decided that any effort to do so would be in vain since the animals would surely drown before reaching maturity. As a result, the Goodmans had taken up truck farming.

Within the last decade, however, an event occurred which changed the lives of those living in the Valley. The nearby town of Valleydale decided to build the Little Springs Dam. Now protected from the raging floodwaters, residents of the Valley could finally build homes of lasting value. Livestock was purchased for the first time and the Valley prospered.

The winter of the fourth year after Herbert T. Goodman moved his family into the Valley had been especially rough. The farm had been blanketed by snow continuously from late October through mid-March. By mid-April, the rising water was pressing hard against the earthen structure of the Little Springs Dam.

The dam was weakening daily. Cracks were being spotted and repaired on an hourly basis. Despite frequent warning by dam personnel, city officials in Valleydale refused to order evacuation of the Valley. They continued to ignore the steadily increasing pressure on the walls of the dam, insisting that all was safe. They were afraid that the residents of the Valley might panic and later accuse the city of Valleydale of declaring safe a structurally unsafe dam, a valid but frightening accusation. No warning was ever issued.

The dam gave way without warning early one morning in late April. It was almost time for spring planting and Herbert had gone up the mountain to Valleydale after some supplies. The entire valley

was washed from the face of the earth in a matter of hours. All of the seventy-five inhabitants of the tiny village at the foot of the mountain were drowned with the livestock and washed away. Many were never found.

His family was on his mind that winter night when Herbert T. Goodman was driving up the mountain. His wife, his daughter, and his mother had all drowned that day while he was away. They were found huddled together in the remains of the old farmhouse. He thought of how he felt when he drove back down the mountain to find a lake where his home once stood. He remembered how he had stood speechless on the road overlooking the Valley. Unable to move, unable to speak. He remembered how he just stood there, watching his life float by. He recalled how the sheriff had found him and led him by the shoulder back to the car where he learned of the fate of his family. He imagined Christy's bright orange hair, matted and tangled by the coarse red mud.

Folks in the Valley said Herbert T. Goodman was never the same after the flood. They were right. He blamed himself for the loss of his family. He often thought that if he had only been there with them, perhaps he could have saved them.

Herbert was so deeply involved with his thoughts that he failed to see the curve ahead. It came upon him without warning. He knew that it was there; he had driven this route up the mountain many times. The world vanished in an instant. Darkness was upon the face of the earth.

Another trucker, passing by on his way up the mountain, spotted the wreckage and notified authorities. Herbert T. Goodman now lay on the operating table of Valleydale General Hospital--dead.

The passage-way was long, but Herbert was near its end. He was able to see the rough outline of a place unlike anything that he had ever seen before. It was beautiful. His cold body was now warmed by the wonderfully brilliant white light radiating from the Paradise just ahead. The warm breezes were now sweeping him toward the end of the tunnel.

Reaching the end, Herbert realized that he had finally arrived at the destination toward which his life had been a journey. He felt a sense of peace and contentment that he had never before known. As he looked out over Paradise, he could hear familiar voices. They were the voices of his family. Now he could see them. His mother and father, Christine, and Christy, her dazzling orange hair brighter and more beautiful than ever before, were running to him with outstretched arms, welcoming him home. They did not blame him at all for their misfortune. In fact, they seemed thankful that they had died. As he beheld the beauty surrounding him, he could understand why. He reached out to meet them, but just as he began to step out into Paradise, he discovered that he could no longer move. He was frozen there, between two worlds.

The heart monitor suddenly displayed an erratic pulse. All eyes were frozen to the tiny screen. The doctors and nurses, more intent now than ever in their struggle to restore life to the slowly bluing cadaver before them, worked even more frantically and hurriedly at their task. Time was either for them or against them.

It was for them. Sighs of relief were heard echoing through the operating room. The tiny blue light on the heart monitor screen was beginning to display its normal rythmical sequence of peaks and valleys. The victim had been saved. The surgical team, gloating over their victory with Death, were preparing for the glory awaiting them. Herbert T. Goodman was alive.

Suddenly, without warning, Herbert was caught in a whirlwind of cold air sucking him back down the tunnel. His body was spinning and whirling; his mind was reeling, and he was overcome with dizziness. The force of the wind smothered him until he could breath no more. He lost consciousness.

The process of awakening was slow. His first thoughts were of his family. Were they still with him? He tried to reach out for them but his arms seemed too heavy to move. He tried to step toward them again but his legs would not move either. In fact, even his eyelids refused to move. They were too heavy also.

As he regained consciousness, Herbert T. Goodman could detect an uncomfortable pressure from his bandages. Soon, the pressure progressed into pain. He was finally able to open his eyelids. His family was not there. They had been replaced by a maze of mechanical monstrosities with blinking blue and red lights and death-like noises. A series of dull white ceiling light glowed softly above his head.

Herbert T. Goodman realized that he had been cheated out of life. He had been provided with a meaningless substitute. He cried bitterly. His journey was not yet over.

As the tears began to course down his cheeks, Herbert reached up in a fit of rage to tear down the wretched machines. He wanted to die; he wanted to go home again. Much to his dismay, however, he could not see his arms. They were gone! Both arms were gone! Springing upward in the bed, tearing needles, wires, and hoses from his mangled body, Herbert saw to his horror, a flat bedspread where the outline of his legs should have been. They were gone too! He was trapped. The dead were awakened by the scream.

David Putnam

ANABASIS

The lie, perhaps, was Petrarch's special gift.
Earthbound, sensual, consuming, exploding
Became detached, spiritual, contained
ABBA Abba Abbbbah Abyss.

A poet stretched art to cover urge,
Aesthetic taut across animal,
Tighter, Tighter, edges slipping,
slipping, Snap!

The Bard himself explored the thing
(drew wisdom from the London press)
"By Jove, I know my mistress' eyes!"
ABAB Abab Abah Bah!

Rejecting art with art,
Returning Plato to his Cave
(Gently! Ever so gently!)

Exposed, discovered, the lie withdrew
Like Milton's hero awaiting Eve.
Tentative,
Patient,

Exploring, it flickered through the Five.
Tortured, racked,
Beauty became Truth; Truth, Beauty
Bruth.

At last (Alas), we know! The lie retreats.
Art is Art is Art is Art Artis
Free verse, sprung rhyme, clock chime
PSY CHOL O GY.
The beast is free.

William B. Stowe

ULYSSES

I sing,
Sirene, mind-wife
in a framework of dreams
spun on a web
of widow-work

Ice crystals form
Rain drops freeze the frail symmetry
to woven silver

The strands see a sun-fired warmth
glinting in refraction of the sky

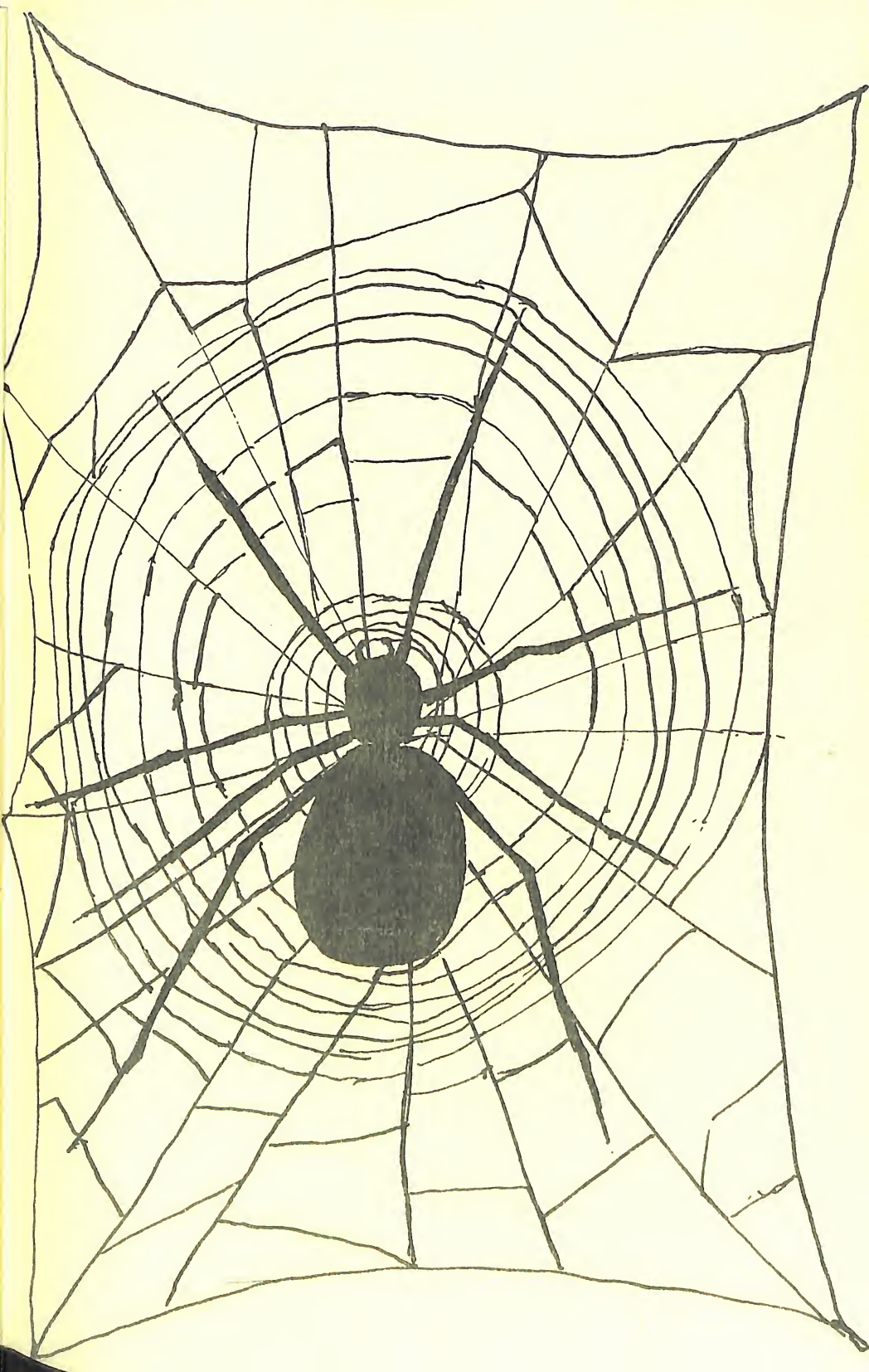
Yet comes winter
in shrouds of darkness disguised,
Hope of preservation

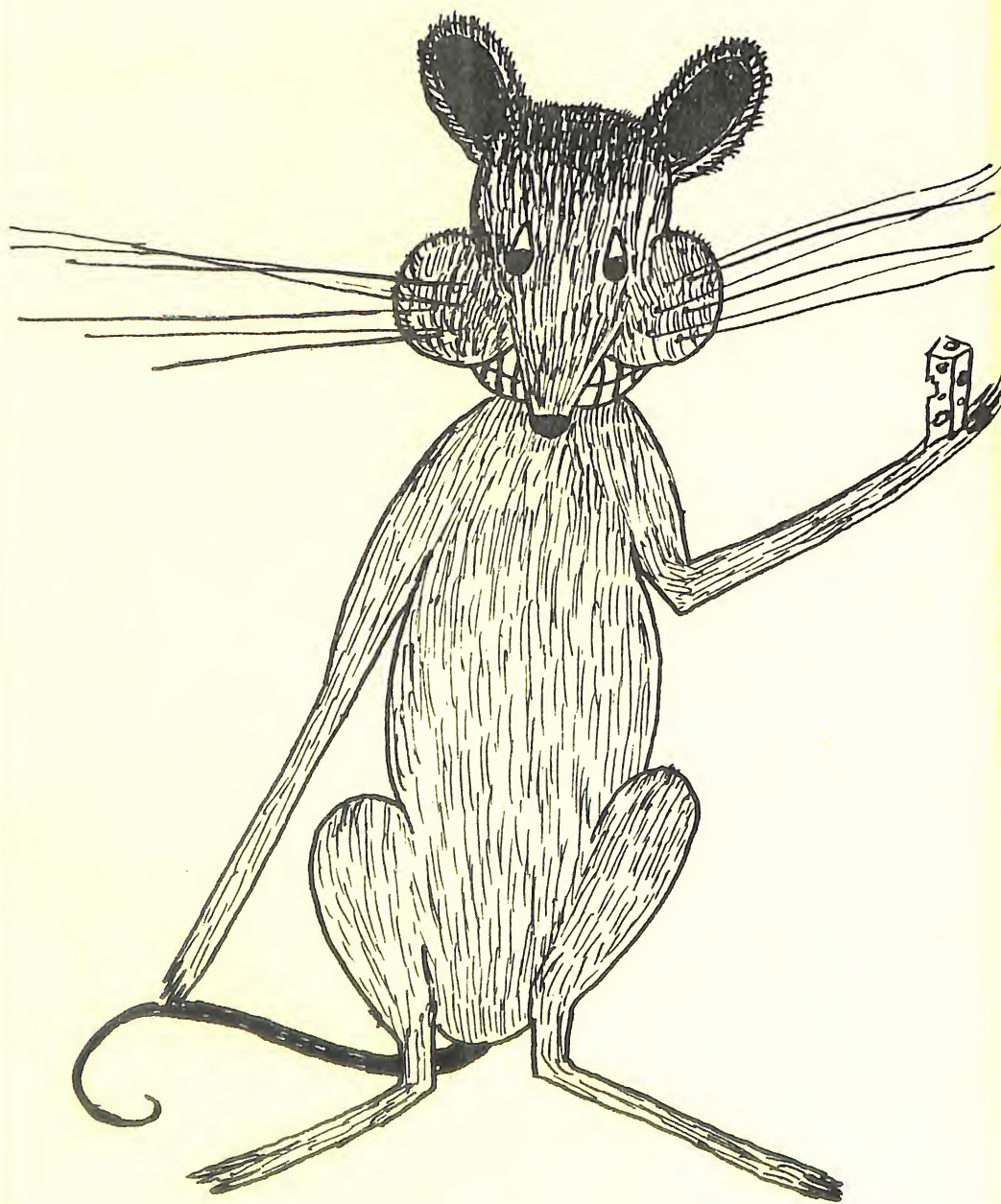
The fragility solidifies

Chants the black Penelope
casting her red chambray
long into the frozen dawn

I sing you
I sing you
I sing

Suzette Collins Thompson





THE MAZE MARTYR

There is a mouse in my room. I see him occasionally but hear his almost nightly rambling curiously about, searching my drawers and shredding my papers. Frequently, I lay awake late at night and listen to his staccato gnawing orchestrated by crickets clicking and leaves rustling among the other night-sounds. Often as I listen I wonder about the past course of my life, the future course it will take, and how I can best guide it. The options carry me off in a trance as I dream of successes and my mind races with thoughts of what I could become.

After countless life-styles have passed through my mind with motion-picture ease, the gnawing ceases and bursts the spheres of my clairvoyance. This leaves me once again pondering past mistakes and present delusions concerning the obtuse remainder of my life. Dejectedly I roll upon my side to sleep and hear the mouse scamper across the wooden bottom of a drawer to escape the squeaking of the box-springs. Yawning, I smile to myself at the mouse's caution and drift into sleep.

The last time I saw the mouse it was early evening, the sun was setting, and a cool late August breeze was filtering gently through the open windows as I lay daydreaming upon my bed. I heard a scratching shuffling sound coming from my desk and quietly leaned to the floor to see what it was. There, beside an old mouse-trap harboring its rank molded cheese bait, the mouse sat haunched and sniffing. He nervously pattered about the trap, often stopping to raise his head up over its side as if undecided whether or not to be lured by the sharp

tang of the cheese. Then my hand slipped upon the floor and, with the squeaking of the box-springs, he was gone, scurrying to a hide-away.

I haven't seen the mouse since. Nor have I checked the trap, or smelled of his entrapment. But frequently as I lay awake late at night, I hear his incessant gnawing for sustenance and in every drawer of my desk, packed in the corners and under boxes and papers, in scraps and shreds, are the fruits of his labor.

Harvey Ramsey

HOW COULD I HAVE FORGOTTEN---

How could I have forgotten how music heals the soul.
How cords of rhythm can smooth the rough spots upon the heart.
How sounds can calm the fleeting, fretting spirit--
Oh, how could I have forgotten so?

How could I have forgotten the great rapture that comes from
listening to these notes.
The lifted spirit---the happy heart that trips about like some small child
upon a sandy shore.
And dreams of joy and love float by and bathe the mind--
with bygone days of sweet embrace.
Oh, how could I have forgotten so?

Bettye Carpenter

EPIPHANY

The wrinkled knotted children have returned
to Christmas past
to spend a golden hour.

They are here swept in by the wind
to march numbly among
ribbons of chill
sliding through time-stained windows
and tangling round their waists.

They have followed the star
and bow to the laughter of new babes upon the rail,
waiting for remission.

Their wrists are bound in gold.
Their bodies float in frankinsence and myrrh.

And though they bring their simple gifts
and worship at the hearth,
they are not wise.

Lewd jokes and dull obscenities,
orange-silk panties and centerfolds
reveal the paltry sins of their lives.
Thin black hair betrays the futile dream.

They break the bread of blindness at the hearth,
sharing childhood seats
in little bodies swollen by age.

And though they drink in remembrance
and confess their lives,
they are not absolved.

But the warm and golden flame spews
 silent strands of Comfort
 round their souls

while truth
 shivers in a jellied rubber hand
 time
 rasps in a jokester's hidden laugh box
 futility
 twists up a spiralled chimney
 and the Jack of Diamonds
 grins up
 from leathered hands.

And now the moneyed swish of elegant dress
 and queenly click of golden shoes
 command dismissal.

Outside, the skies blaze with news
 of the pause.

Strains of golden glory
 streak upward,
 defying cords of smoke -
 and wind
 and fog,
and cough Hosanna.

Joyce Brown

STRING OF PEARLS

Like the oyster wraps invading,
irritating grains of sand
with continuing secretion
of healing calcium carbonate
to make a lustrous pearl,

so my mind enfolds swift thrusts of beauty,
and through the magic of my memory,
rolls and coats them in my soul's secretion
of love and gratitude for the encounter,
each reliving of the moment
applies one more solidifying layer
until it becomes pure pearl.

Whenever winter winds bring chill
of sickness, sorrow or deep loneliness,
or often in bright solitude
I run a portion of my string of pearls
through the fingers of my mind.

T. M. Linnens

LONELY WINTRY NIGHTS

There's no moon tonight,
Stars are in shroud,
Moaning winds are chilling
Small, tight places once warm.
Lights are turned down low and
In the hearth, half-hiding embers
Cast a sullen orange glow.
Untouched dinner dishes set the table;
The cold, untouched dinner sits on the stove.
As that lonely echo strains the air,
Rowdy sits in the window,
His nose propped on the sill;
And holding a burned-out cigarette filter,
Mother's asleep in the chair.

Taped music played-out, hisses;
Its harmonious melody drifted away.
Long ashes drop from slow-burning butts as
Glazed eyes ooze dry without a wink.
Impervious to time, I sit entranced,
Staring at and inhaling and exhaling the wall.
Logical options movie my mind
As loneliness moves my soul.
And oh yes - I know why
Rowdy sits in the window and
Mother sleeps in the chair.

Harvey Ramsey



HATORASK SPELL

A half a thousand miles away
I cannot shake the spell - -
the surf still pounds in ear and soul,
and the wind that bowed the sea oats
blows scenes and sounds across the miles - -

Hattaras lighthouse in the distance
framed by Avon's long pier's piling;
flinging golden light at dusk,
warning travellers off the rugged,
treacherous Diamond Shoals.

The bleached and bony skeletons
of the ancient shipwrecked steamers,
caught and kept by shifting sands,
like stubborn Outer Bankers
facing hurricanes and storms,
loneliness and isolation,
their spirits caught and kept
in the spell of Hatorask,
of sea and sand and sky and wind,
peace peering through blue eyes
set in weathered, wrinkled faces.

Beyond the noise of traffic,
above the din of crowds
come the faint sounds of the surf and wind
and the cries of wheeling gulls,
and the whisper of your lips.

T. M. Linnens

OH, LORD; THE GREAT POWER OF THY MIGHT
BY THY WORD WERE ALL THE BEAUTY OF CREATION MADE

Just to sit in the white laced sand
 of a sunset beach
... to see the great and wonderful waves
 of a mighty ocean
... to hear its scarce force, its rhythm
 beating against the shore
... to listen and understand your sweetest song
 of peace rustling over the shells
... to stand on the pier at nightfall, to feel the warmth
 of the summer breeze in my hair
... to watch the fish around the pillows
 and a ship out upon the sea
... to know that you have made it all
 and you made it all for me
... to pray as I look down the shoreline
 into a beauty filled path of sunset
... to gaze at the yellow-red horizon
 toward the dawning of a new and glorious day
... who is to know the bountiful blessings
 I know that you will bring
I can feel the quiet of this sight
 the bliss and joy of my soul
I can feel your love surround me
 your grace, your glory untold
This peace that you have given me
 I pray for all of the world to see
And to take thought of the promise of heaven
 the more peaceful place to be.

Z. K. Reavis

NIAGRA
(OR ANYWHERE ELSE)

To go is to know.
To want to know and not to go is to be afraid.
To claim to know and not to have gone is to be
a fraud.
To go and not to know is to be dull.
To go and be disappointed is the risk of being
told to go.

John R. Drayer

A GLIMPSE AHEAD

Everything that is, wasn't
Nothing that is, will be.
All that will be, isn't.
Except existence.
And that is
Was
And is to be.

John R. Drayer

IMPLOSION

Junaluska,

Honorary citizen of your native land,
Battered old man with obsidian eyes,
 black eyes blaring the last and silent cry
 against the loss of life
 against the loss of will.

When the palid photographer retreated
 under his black hood, did he
 tremble at the truth that he saw?

As I now sicken from the refracted power
 of a bundled old man
 on a straightback chair
 in front of a cabin
 provided by
the State
 which cut a red and muddy streak
 across your Snowbirds

and now provides a plaque
 marking the grave
 of the last great
 Cherokee warrior.

Joyce Brown



Drawing by J. Brown
From N. C. Dept. of Archives Photo

R00D

Spheres
hurtle in space
hearing the classicism of darkness
A total vibrato plays the senses
Druid dirges
Primative chants
Dissonance
A chill wind blows
"It is over."

Suzette Collins Thompson

